

many times over. We thank them and all—all of the adoptive parents in the country.

For those who are now or have been foster or adoptive parents, I'd like to say thank you on behalf of a grateful Nation, and again say at Thanksgiving, let us thank God for our blessings and resolve to give more of our children the blessings they deserve.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:53 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sue Ann Badeau, who introduced the President, and her adopted brother Aaron, 2 of 19 children adopted by parents Sue and Hector Badeau; Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado; Dave Thomas, founder and senior chairman of the board of directors, Wendy's International, Inc. H.R. 867, approved November 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105–89.

## Statement on Signing the Veterans' Compensation Rate Amendments of 1997

*November 19, 1997*

Today I was pleased to sign into law H.R. 2367, the "Veterans' Compensation Rate Amendments of 1997."

Our Nation provides compensation payments to veterans who were disabled in service and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits to the survivors of those who died in military service. By maintaining the real value of these payments, we honor their sacrifices.

This Act provides a 2.1 percent increase in compensation and DIC benefits, effective December 1, 1997. This increase is the same percentage increase that Social Security beneficiaries and veterans' pension recipients will receive in January. Approximately 2.3 million veterans and over 300,000 surviving spouses and children will benefit from this increase.

Time will never erode the supreme value of our veterans' and servicemembers' efforts in defending the Nation's freedom. We also must not allow it to erode the value of our commitments to them. This legislation ensures that the worth of their richly deserved benefits keeps pace with consumer prices. As such, it maintains our obligation to those individuals whose sacrifices we will always remember.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
November 19, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 2367, approved November 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105–98.

## Statement on Signing District of Columbia Appropriations Legislation

*November 19, 1997*

Today I am pleased to have signed into law H.R. 2607, the "District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 1998."

I am particularly pleased that the Act provides sufficient funding to implement the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997 (Revitalization Act), which includes the main elements of the plan for the District of Columbia that I proposed in my 1998 budget in February. That plan,

which was the most comprehensive plan that any Administration had ever proposed for the District, was designed to achieve two goals: to revitalize Washington, D.C., as the Nation's capital and to improve prospects for "home rule" to succeed. The Congress adopted the Revitalization Act as part of the historic balanced budget agreement that I signed into law last summer. Now, with this 1998 appropriations bill, the

Congress has provided the funds to implement it.

The Act also drops several of the objectionable micro-management and other provisions in the original House-passed version of the bill such as Federal funding for private school vouchers, the requirement to reopen Pennsylvania Avenue, the limitation on public assistance payments, the prohibition on Treasury borrowing authority for the District, and restrictions on the District's authority to make improvements in its financial management system.

The Act continues to contain abortion language that would prohibit the use of Federal and District funds to pay for abortions except in cases in which the life of the mother is endangered or in situations involving rape or incest. The continued prohibition on the use of local funds is an unwarranted intrusion into the affairs of the District.

In addition, the Act makes important changes to last year's immigration bill by offering more generous treatment to Central Americans than was available under that bill. These changes make good on the pledge I made during my trip to Central America last spring. Nevertheless,

I have several concerns. First, I am troubled by the differences in relief offered to similarly situated persons. I believe, however, that these differences can be minimized in the implementation process. I therefore am asking the Attorney General to consider the ameliorative purposes of this legislation and the unique history and circumstances of the people covered by it in giving effect to its provisions. Second, I believe that similar relief should be made available to Haitians and will seek a legislative solution for this group. Finally, I ask the Congress to revisit its decision to continue to apply some of the harsher rules under last year's immigration bill to other persons with pending immigration cases who are not covered by H.R. 2607. I commend to the public my statement of November 14 for a further discussion of these issues.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
November 19, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 2607, approved November 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105-100.

## Remarks at the Ecumenical Breakfast *November 20, 1997*

Thank you very much, and welcome to the White House. I am delighted to see you all. Let me say that we do want to talk about the obligation imposed on all of us to secure a future in which all of us are a part.

But in light of developments in the last day in Iraq, I would like to say just a word about that. The meeting of the foreign ministers last night in Geneva strongly reaffirmed our unanimous position: Saddam Hussein must comply unconditionally with the will of the international community and allow all the weapons inspectors back to Iraq so they can get on with doing their jobs without interference. After that meeting, he said he would do that. In the coming days we will wait and see whether he does, in fact, comply with the will of the international community.

I just want to reiterate that the United States must remain and will remain resolute in our

determination to prevent him from threatening his neighbors or the world with nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. This is an issue that I hope will become even more important to all Americans and a greater subject of discussion. We must do that. That is the duty we have to our children.

Now, let me say I look forward to these meetings every year. I have done, I think, one or two breakfasts like this every year I've been President. And even though we're discussing a kind of public issue today, I get a lot of personal solace out of this, and it always helps me sort of to put things back in perspective. And to give you an idea of how badly we in Washington need things put in perspective here, I got a cartoon out of *The New Yorker* magazine that is a doctor talking to a patient. You might imagine that the patient is anyone who spends 60 hours a week or more working in this city. The